The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Charitable Competition
Lexington's National Honor Society organized a school-wide talent show to encourage students to help fundraise.
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Strategy and Self-defense
LHS student Keya You shared her insight on the benefits and challenges of practicing the martial art of taekwondo.
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Volume LIV Issue III— Feb 2013

Student-planned dance takes place after numerous obstacles

■ Claire Huang
Andrea Michelson
Staff Writers

An unofficial, unsanctioned Winter Whiteout dance was hosted at Sons of Italy, a Woburn events space, on Feb. 1, though not without concerns from school administrators and local authorities.

After the school dance ban came into effect at the beginning of the year, Bruno Costa and Simon Schneider, both seniors and student DJs, decided to take matters into their own hands and organize Whiteout 2012.

"We were thinking, 'Hey, let's host a Whiteout-type party, let's give the seniors something to do that is off school grounds and that's a bigger event,'" said Schneider.

However, the dance, which Schneider and Costa had originally scheduled for Dec. 15 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Waltham, was postponed after complications with contracting and liability.

On Nov. 28, Costa and Schneider received a warning regarding liability from Dean Nancy DeFeudis for selling tickets to the party on school grounds.

"It was causing confusion," she said. "Some people thought it was a school event. We have to keep the events separate so people don't think it was a school-sanctioned dance."

Later that evening, Schneider and Costa received an email from the Hilton Garden Inn requesting an adult signature on the contract with the venue.

About a week later on Dec. 11, Schneider and Costa received another email from the hotel. According to Schneider and his father Rob, Costa's father, without having contacted either of them, had told the hotel he no longer intended to sign the contract because of liability concerns. The Hilton Garden Inn's events coordinator, Tasha Gray, responded by informing Simon Schneider and Costa that the event was canceled since one of the parties voided the agreement.

Rob Schneider said he then called Gray, telling her, "I'm not canceling. I'll come over there any-time, right now, and I'll sign the contract as the sole contractee."

Gray agreed to let the preparations continue, but would not arrange a meeting with the Schneiders until later that week on Thursday.

According to Rob Schneider, before any contracts could be signed, Tim Hippensteele, the general manager of Waltham's Hilton Garden Inn, called Rob Schneider on Dec. 12 to cancel the event once again, saying he had spoken to the Waltham Police Department.

After speaking to Hippensteele, Rob Schneider called the WPD to investigate.

"In my conversation with Sgt. [Dennis] Deveney, he expressed concerns about the number of kids, and that they were Lexington kids that would be having a party in Waltham," said Rob Schneider.

In a later conversation with The Musket, Deveney said the WPD notified the Hilton Garden Inn about their concerns after the dance was brought to their attention.

Though Costa and Simon Schneider called the event off for Dec. 15, they were determined to make Whiteout happen.

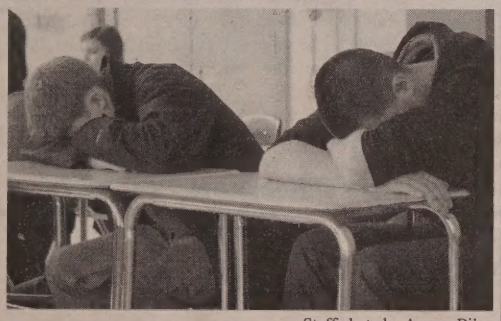
"We've worked long and hard on this event," said Simon Schneider, "and we owe it to the people who have tickets, and we kind of owe it to ourselves, to make this happen."

Hippensteele could not be reached for comment.

WHITEOUT

Stress-reduction policies integrated into classrooms

■ Erin Lee
Kelly Lew
Staff Writers



Staff photo by Arman Bilge

Abe Benghiat and Justin Krasinski, both juniors, participate in the stress-reduction activity led by Anne Carey, the dance and yoga teacher, during the extended homeroom on Dec. 18.

At Lexington High School, new stress reduction policies are being incorporated into the learning system to help students manage the pressures of their hectic high school schedules.

In order to ease LHS' high-strung environment, the administration has promoted frequent extended homeroom activities and health class exercises to teach stress-coping mechanisms.

In past years, policies such as the exclusion of weighted GPAs and class ranks and more accommodating assessment scheduling were implemented to address the issue of unhealthy student stress. In addition, the administration began to offer resources such as a stress reduction webpage and seminars with college psychologists to support students in dealing with pressure.

"One of the things that I've observed is the way in which high levels of stress here for students has become a social reward," said Laura Lasa, principal of LHS.

In response to this competitive mentality, Lasa explained that the objective of recent stress-reducing policies is to remind students to enjoy their experience in high school rather than fixate solely on grades and getting into prestigious colleges.

Working to help students release their stress, health teachers recently introduced

[STRESS, page 7]

Program introduces minority students to teaching profession

■ Grace Wu
Soumya Ram
Staff Writers

Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers is a new four-year program initiated at Lexington High School to inspire and educate minority students in the teaching profession.

Founded in 1994 by CEO and president Bettye Perkins, the nonprofit organization Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers, Inc. has spread its work to New York, Connecticut, Virginia and recently, Massachusetts, with nearly 50 high schools and 600 students participating in the program.

Launched at LHS in 2011, the program was designed to promote cultural diversity among teaching staff of schools across the country. By recruiting and training minority high school students as early as freshman year who are interested in a career in education, the program aims to mold future teachers by introducing students to the career path and setting them up to be role models in their communities.

Minority students participating in TSTT meet on a monthly basis with mentors. These monthly meetings give students the opportunity to work and train one-on-one with their mentors and address any questions or concerns they might have. Students also receive hands-on training such as internships, tutoring at least two hours per week during the school year, and an additional 20 hours each summer.

"What's good about this

[STUDENTS, page 7]

Facebook Compliments page facilitates positive community interactions

■ Jamie Yang
Staff Writer

Amidst a technological age marred by cyberbullying and social media abuse, Lexington High School students have adopted an creative counter-attack to online negativity.

Inspired by a social project at Queen's University, Lexington Compliments was created on Dec. 6 as a public Facebook account that, according to its description, "will anonymously post [compliments sent by students] on its page."

Among the long-standing culture of rumors and insult-driven social venues, this Facebook account strives to do the opposite by acknowledging individuals' strengths. The anonymous founders of Lexington Compliments made it clear that their attention was solely to recognize the talent and kindness of the LHS student body, which is too often left unnoticed. The creators deserve appreciation for their commitment to screening out posts that do not praise.

By creating an environment where people log onto Facebook to see admiration rather than criticism, LHS students build a community founded on appreciation.

With more than 1,034 friends, Lexington Compliments has united students and is reinforced by the overwhelmingly positive response it receives from users in the form of comments, likes and contributions.

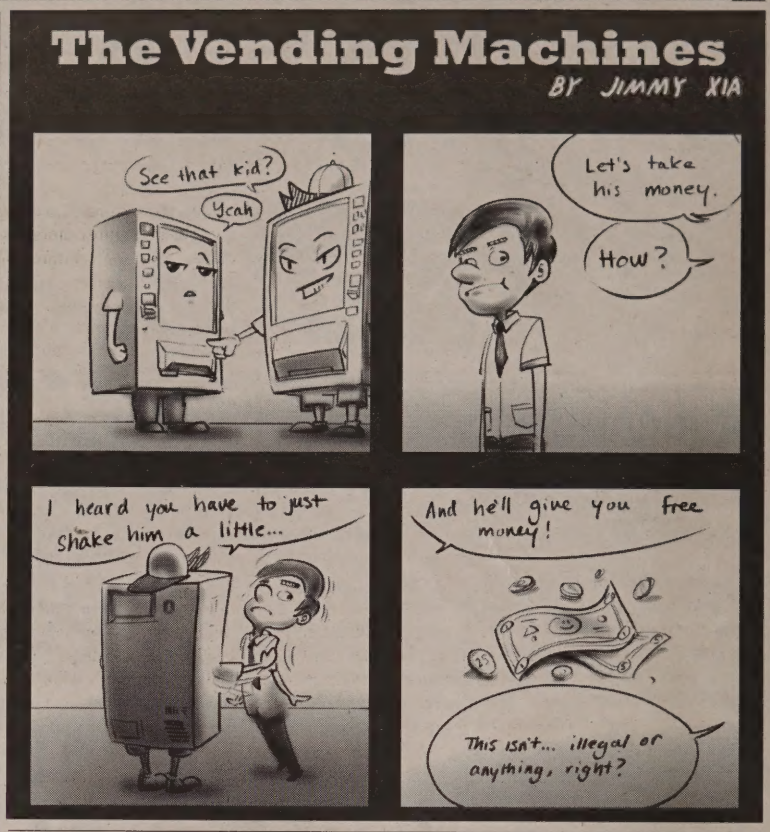
Compliments, ranging from "Lydia Gold is the type of girl you want to marry" to "Noah Virgile has the snazziest outfits around town," flood students' newsfeeds on a daily basis. Compliments like these consistently garner Facebook likes and comments, allowing students to humbly spread positivity among the community. Lexington Compliments has shaped the social networking environment into a more supportive setting.

"People have so many nice things to say about their classmates, and it never really gets told. But now that there is Lexington Compliments, the compliments are out and I think it's awesome," said Karen Lin, a senior.

Lin's approval was echoed by others. Students' excitement over praises both for their peers and themselves has put the LHS community in high spirits.

"Reading the compliments for me boosted my self-esteem," said Caroline Berger, a sophomore. "It validated my wanting to be in Lexington and helped me know that there are people out there that really like me."

The LHS mission statement concludes with the goal that "together we strive to model behavior that will help make our campus a microcosm of the world we hope to create." Lexington students, spurred by the prevalence of hate in online communities, have thus modeled an admirable push for positivity that is


The Vending Machines
BY JIMMY XIA
See that kid?
Yeah
Let's take his money.
How?
I heard you have to just shake him a little...
And he'll give you free money!
This isn't... illegal or anything, right?

Lasa responds appropriately to tragic Newtown shooting

■ Stephanie Yin
Staff Writer

The Newtown, Conn., tragedy on Dec. 14 sent shock waves throughout the nation and in particular, its schools. Lexington Public Schools were no exception.

The Monday following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, students at LHS found their A block class interrupted by an announcement expressing condolences to Newtown and assuring students that "reasonable and prudent security precautions are in place at all schools in Lexington." The message ended with a moment of silence and a request by Principal Laura Lasa asking teachers to refrain from discussing the tragedy in class.

The senseless act of violence that ended the lives of 26 innocent people and interrupted the lives of millions stirred a staggering and sobering realization that there really is no place free of danger. Schools from Columbine to Virginia Tech to Sandy Hook were all supposed to be safe havens where kids could learn and grow, securely sheltered from any outside harm.

As human beings, we absolutely need a vehicle to discuss such devastating events, but that discussion needs to take place in the appropriate venue. In that sense, I support

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"One day we will win our freedom and we will not only win freedom for ourselves but we will so appeal to your heart and your conscience that we will win you in the process. And our victory will be a double victory. This has been our message."

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

50th anniversary

On Feb. 11, 1963, King spoke to 1,200 community members at Lexington High School, addressing discrimination and segregation.

Courtesy of Lexington Minuteman via Lexington Historical Society

Dance committee replaces ban with safety contract policy

■ **Jackie Kong**
Katie Chen
Staff Writers

Lexington High School students will have to copy and sign pledges at school-sponsored dances and follow other regulations, after a new policy was approved on Jan. 30.

The formation of this new policy ended the months-long ban on school dances. The policy requires students to copy and sign a pledge when they buy tickets, and they must be present for a half-hour period before dancing begins at the event. No tickets will be sold at the door, and DJs will be restricted to adults only. Additionally, students will be subject to breathalyzer tests if they are under reasonable suspicion of substance abuse.

"I feel we've made some very positive strides towards ensuring that the students who do come to the dances .... do know the outlines of student dance culture," said Adam Goldberg, associate principal of LHS.

Over the summer, Goldberg and other administrators discussed the dance culture and concluded that inappropriate dancing and substance abuse put student safety at risk and created an uncomfortable environment for many students attending past dances.

Because of these concerns, a special committee was appointed in the fall to discuss changes for future dances. The committee is composed of members of the Student-Faculty Senate, each grade's class council, interested students, club advisers and administrators. The board is headed by Goldberg, Dean David Lautman, who oversees club activities, Sen. Aren Torikian, a junior, and Sen. Rina Farber-Mazor, a French teacher.

The pledges students must copy and sign are as follows: "I pledge to abide by all school rules," "I pledge to dance in an appropriate manner," "I pledge to attend the dance sober" and "I pledge to attend the dance free of the influence of illicit drugs." The committee's intention in approving this measure was that by writing out these pledges, students will be more deeply aware of the safety contract they have signed.

Dances will be held on a provisional basis during a probation period while the special committee assesses the new policy's success.

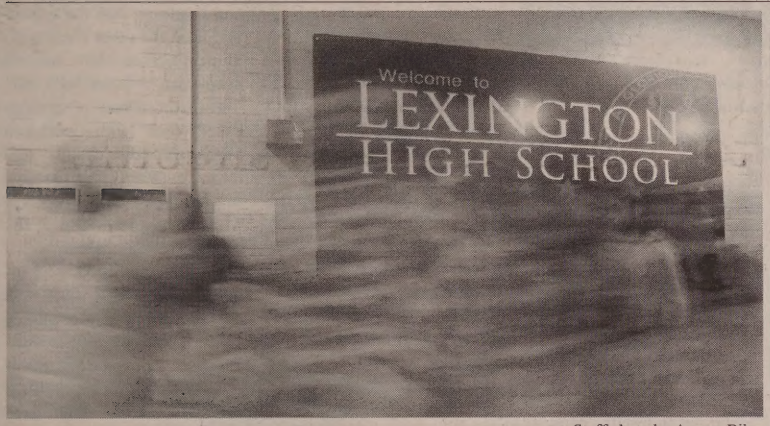
Students voiced differing opinions on the administration's new stance.

"I think this new dance policy will be successful in preventing people from entering the dance while being under the influence as they need to sign the pledges themselves," said Sen. Jongwon Kim, a sophomore. "On the other hand, I think students will be slightly uncomfortable with this new policy because they might think that the school is becoming more strict and is preventing people from being able to have the fun they want in school dances."

Samantha Coen, a junior, said though there was reason for the cancellations, it "was clearly unfair for the majority of the students who enjoyed the dances and who did not participate in hazardous activities."

The administration said it played no part in the student-organized Winter Whiteout dance.

"No school dances will be held off school campus, with the exception of the proms," said Chris Doucette, moderator of the Student-Faculty Senate.



Staff photo by Arman Bilge

Students walk by the new signs installed in the main hallways during passing time.

Basketball mural moved to gym; new sign welcomes visitors in main hallway

■ **Ayesha Harisinghani**
Nick Flynn
Staff Writers

A new Lexington High School sign replaced the basketball mural in December, after greeting students in the main hallway for about 20 years.

The idea for a new sign came from Sean Hagan, coordinator of the fine arts department. Hagan said he noticed that the basketball mural had been present for a long time and thought it was time for a change. He wanted the new sign to be inviting and "an identifier" that would welcome students into the school and show them where they were.

"I wanted the imagery to represent not only the school, but the town and its historic aspect," Hagan said.

Hagan created the sign in Adobe Photoshop and worked to combine LHS' name with symbolism of the town. He drew subtle stars and stripes to represent the American flag, and added the seal of Lexington.

When Hagan originally thought of the idea, he sought the approval of Laura Lasa, then associate principal and current principal. Lasa agreed with Hagan and thought that the sign would be a great way to welcome people and guide them when entering the high school. She also thought the sign's representation of the different aspects of Lexington "make[s] a statement about who we are."

"The idea is not that we advertise individual achievements, we're advertising collective achievements and diversity," she said.

After Lasa's approval, with funding from the PTSA, the sign was printed out on a durable aluminum sheet. While the new sign is up and the brick is being painted over with gray and blue stripes on the bottom, the old mural will be recreated in another part of the school.

Both Lasa and Hagan confirmed that the previous mural was of former LHS basketball player Marvin McIntyre, contrary to the popular belief that it was former NBA player Ronnie Lee. Lasa and Hagan made sure McIntyre was contacted before putting up the sign.

[RENOVATIONS, page 7]

Former students return to share experiences and tips about the college process

■ **Elizabeth Kane**
Crissy Leach
Staff Writers

On Jan. 9, seven former Lexington High School students returned to offer words of wisdom to juniors and seniors on the college process in a class-wide assembly.

Adam Goldberg, LHS associate principal, organized the assembly for upperclassmen to showcase the many opportunities students have after high school.

"I hope [students] take away that no matter what, your future works out," said Goldberg. "There is more than one path to your destination, whether you are attending a state school, an Ivy League school, a community college or taking a gap year. The LHS experience prepares you for it all."

The LHS alumni gave advice on finding the right schools, preparing for the transition from high school to college and taking advantage of the daunting college experience. Speakers discussed the importance of trusting personal instincts when stuck in the college process, rather than only doing what others expect.

"Trust what you are passionate about," said Hannah Weinronk, one of the speakers, who currently attends UMass Amherst. "If you care about it, it'll come through. You have amazing opportunities wherever you go."

On deciding what to do after high school, the alumni spoke about how students often overlook the option of taking a gap year, during which they can pursue real-world opportunities outside of the classroom.

Sophie Meyers, who will be a freshman at Bowdoin College next year, and Russell Bollag-Miller, a current sophomore at Skidmore College, both chose to take a gap year after graduating from high school, a decision that their peers later wished they had made.

Meyers decided to split her gap year into three different phases. She spent the first part of her year working on the Obama campaign and is currently in the second phase of her year, which involves volunteering as a classroom aide in a Dorchester, Mass., school.

"Gap years give different experiences," said Meyers. "I haven't met a single person who wishes they didn't take a gap year."

While Meyers stayed in the United States, Bollag-Miller spent his gap year abroad

[ASSEMBLY, page 7]

Performers, NHS come together to raise funds

■ Evaline Han
Emily Hu
Staff Writers

Staff photo by Arman Bilge

August Sherman, a junior and member of National Honor Society, tap dances in the talent show on Dec. 15.

On Dec. 15, Lexington High School's chapter of National Honor Society hosted its annual talent show, offering a chance for LHS students to show off their skills while supporting a charitable cause.

The show, featuring 27 acts, served as a fundraiser for Horizons for Homeless Children, an organization based in Massachusetts that aims to help children and families by providing education, opportunities for play and support for families. Students with diverse talents ranging from singing to dancing, instrumental ensembles to stand-up comedy and psychological magic to break-dancing took to the stage to raise about $800.

Participants competed for first, second and third place prizes based on a score out of 40 points for creativity, difficulty, presentation and entertainment value from a panel of teacher judges.

"This year we didn't have any ties, but [the winners] were very close: they were just one point off from each other," said Parul Kumar, a chemistry teacher and NHS adviser who helped oversee and judge the show. "In the past years sometimes we had ties, so we would give prizes to all the participants ... It is so difficult to judge, because there are so many acts; so many students are so good."

The first place winner was the break-dancing team of three Lung brothers: Genesis, an LHS graduate; James, a senior; and Timothy, a junior. Anindita Chanda, a junior who sang "Memory" and "Think of Me," won second place and Brian White, also a junior, took third with his 10-minute performance of the

[NHS, page 7]

collegebored

Seniors, it's time to kick back, relax and watch a good show

■ Matt Lee
Columnist

There's a song from a Sesame Street video I used to watch as a kid that's been playing over and over in my head lately. It's the one about Elmo and his crew helping the firemen in a firehouse, and all of them are going crazy with boredom because all they can do at the firehouse is wait until the fire bell rings, calling them to duty.

Sadly, for those of you who haven't seen it, I can't find this video on YouTube, but I recommend that, if you happen to be able to rent and play a VHS, you get a copy of "Sesame Street Home Video Goes to the Firehouse."

Why, you might ask? Because we seniors are all waiting to hear back from colleges, and there's literally nothing we can do about it. We just have to wait. So why not go out and get a classic video that empathizes with you? Elmo and Big Bird's sonorous refrains of "Waiting, and waiting, and waiting for the bell to riiiing" will remind you that now's not the time to tense up and let the thought of that letter in the mail or that fateful click of the refresh button on a college's website dominate your mind.

Now is the time to let go. We've put in months of work, we've done our absolute best, and we've accomplished great things. Now is the time to let go because it really is out of our hands. If you've put in your best work, whether you achieve what you want or not, you have been successful. You can't control how qualified others are out there, so don't try.

Wait for the bell to ring, and relax while you do it. Once it does, there will be a fresh set of worries about choosing the right school, financial aid and preparing for the work ahead ... so waiting is the easy part. Big Bird doesn't stress about when the fire's coming; he sings a song. And think about what happens after the fire, too. Elmo probably kicked back afterwards at a fireman's barbecue with a cold brew. (Don't worry, Elmo's been around for 52 years; he's of drinking age at this point.)

For us seniors, we've finally earned the reward of a re-

[COLLEGE, page 7]

New American restaurant caters to teens, adults alike

■ Anisa Haque
Jungwan Kim
Staff Writers

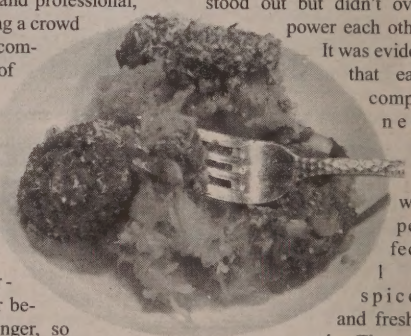
A new American-style restaurant has joined the diverse collection of restaurants in Lexington Center: Vine Brook Tavern, which opened last fall at 20 Waltham St.

Marcus Palmer, the owner of Vine Brook Tavern and 13 other restaurants, said he viewed Lexington as a good location for the restaurant because previously there "hadn't [been] any real American-style restaurants" or ones with good bars.

He added that Vine Brook Tavern is inspired by his favorite restaurant, Gramercy Tavern, in Manhattan. He loved "what they did and how they did it" there, so he wanted to emulate it, creating an atmosphere where anyone could be comfortable.

This became clear as soon as we walked in. The charm of Vine Brook's setting struck us immediately. Palmer himself designed the interior: a large bar stocked with assorted bottles of spirits, surrounded by glossy, wooden furniture with lights overhead resembling miniature chandeliers.

The atmosphere seemed mature and professional, attracting a crowd mainly composed of adults. However, we were not treated any differently for being younger, so LHS students can rest assured that they can dine at ease here.



In fact, Palmer said that although he had intended for a more adult-oriented restaurant, "30 percent of the business is kids under the age of 12," and added that he hopes more LHS students can come with their families to enjoy the food.

Upon being seated, we ordered the Fall Chopped Salad ($9) as an appetizer. It contained grilled radicchio, beets, blue cheese and almond cider vinaigrette. Though labeled as an appetizer, the portion was large enough for us to share comfortably. All of the ingredients tasted very fresh and the flavors blended nicely together, with a texture that caused a satisfying crunch at each mouthful.

While munching on some heavenly-smelling complimentary bread rolls, Jungwan ordered the Vine Brook Burger ($15) as her main dish. The presentation was very neat; the burger lay on the plate in halves and, as a cute addition, the sweet potato fries were served in a miniature pan.

The burger contained Vermont cheddar cheese, bibb lettuce, red onion and tomatoes, all of which were fresh and flavorful. Though the meat in the burger was burnt on the surface as a result of being cooked medium-well, it was juicy and savory on the inside. Meanwhile, the sweet potato fries were better and healthier than the typical fast-food fries that come with burgers, since they weren't deep-fried or caked with salt.

Anisa ordered a quinoa-based dish with garbanzo beans, shaved vegetables and avocado ($16). The massive serving was presented in a white bowl that added to the elegance of the dish.

Besides quality of presentation, the actual dish was delicious. All of the flavors stood out but didn't overpower each other. It was evident that each component was perfectly spiced and freshly made. The quinoa dish made for a nice vegetarian option that anyone can enjoy and, according to our waiter, is one of Vine Brook Tavern's most popular dishes.

Overall, Vine Brook's ingredients seem fresh and the quality of the food is excellent. This high-end restaurant offers various main entrees ranging from $15 to $24 at night, and serves lunch as well on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Although its sophisticated setting can be intimidating at first, Vine Brook Tavern is certainly suitable for LHS students and worth a try.

Improv Troupe employs humor and creativity to entertain LHS

■ Cathy Ouyang
Mayuhka Karnam
Staff Writers

With a reputation as one of Lexington High School's most energetic and humorous clubs, the audition-only Improv Troupe uses improvisational techniques to entertain its audiences in performances throughout the year.

The group meets on Tuesdays from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Blackbox Theater, during which members experiment with improv games and strategies and provide feedback to one another on their performances.

Practices are usually run by one of the Troupe members and consist of both long form and short games. Long form starts off as a few unrelated skits that are eventually tied together. Katherine Bromley, the Troupe adviser and a teacher at Diamond Middle School, introduces new warms-ups or exercises.

However, "the Troupe members run their own shows and rehearsals," Bromley said.

Members of Improv Troupe described the atmosphere as very open, non-judgemental and, above all, fun.

"It's kind of this collaborative storm of fun," said Troupe member Mat Benson, a freshman.

Staff photo by Thomas Marge

The Improv Troupe acted out a scene during their "Last day on Earth" show on Dec. 21 in the Blackbox Theater.

The Improv Troupe is involved in eight events per year, the most recent of which took place on Dec. 21, marking the last day of school in 2012 and, according to some interpretations of the Mayan Calendar, the end of the world.

The theme of the December show was "Last day on Earth," but it also featured characters traditionally associated with the holidays, such as Christmas elves. The Troupe conducted several games, very similar to the ones they play during practices, including traditional favorites such as "The World's Worst" and "Rap Battle." The Troupe's comedic performance was rewarded with audience laughter.

The audience played an active role in the performance, shouting out suggestions for locations, restrictions and characters. Instead of paying $3 before the show, many people chose the option of writing three suggestions for the performers on slips of paper. During the show, audience members were asked to pull suggestions out of a basket.

For many of the audience members, it was not their first time seeing the Improv Troupe perform. Many are compelled after seeing past shows to return and, in some cases, join the Troupe.

The infectious nature of the Improv Troupe's humor seems to affect audience and actors alike.

Dan Kilbridge, a senior and member since last year, said "hearing the audience laugh and having my existence reaffirmed" is his favorite part of performing.

Improv Troupe lightens the mood not only for audience members, but for group members as well.

"Even when I've had a terrible, terrible day, I come to Troupe and it always makes me happier," said sophomore Troupe member Elianna Clayton.

Alumni Flashback: Rosenberg recalls how David's teaching philosophy shaped her views

■ Alyssa Rosenberg
Guest Columnist
Class of 2002

When I arrived in Mr. David's American History class my junior year, I learned that he had a different approach to the past than any teacher I'd had before. It's one thing to learn history as if it's something separate from yourself, as I had in years before. It's quite another to come to an understanding that we live in a world of history's creation, built by the hands and choices of the people who came before us, and that we create the future with a combination of the tools they bequeathed us and our own inventions.

By the end of the year, Mr. David had taught me that, and I'd come to understand that he was preparing those of us in his class not just for Advanced Placement exams, but for life as citizens long after we were done with the classroom.

Without a sense of the labor movement as the breathing, bloodied effort of the early 20th century that I acquired in Mr. David's classroom, thanks to his special focus on labor history, I'm not sure I would have searched out the unions who represented workers on my own campus when I started my first year at Yale. Their members continued my education in how to turn the lessons of the past into the power to alter the present. And without that memory of the pleasure of deciphering an idea for yourself, I don't know that I would have ventured out to the front lines of fights for the extension of a university-run home loan program to formerly redlined neighborhoods, or for financial aid reform.

It was Mr. David's lessons that encouraged me to bring historical maps of African-American neighborhoods that had been excluded from federal housing aid to a meeting with the Yale administrator who ran the program, and to show the man how the university was replicating old and discriminatory programs. And it was the things he'd taught me about ideas like solidarity that encouraged me to think about the role that organizations like Yale play in social promotion, and to call on my own school to better fulfill that purpose.

Now, as a film, television, and book critic for ThinkProgress, I write about the politics of popular culture more than I participate in politics directly myself. But I've never forgotten that everything, even culture, has its own secret history and bears the marks of its times. I write about how few women are employed by the film and

[ALUMNI, page 7]

Concert held by Pura Vida Project supports hospital in Guatemala

■ Justin Kim
Michael Heyang
Staff Writers

The Pura Vida Project held a benefit concert on Dec. 7 at the Hancock United Church to benefit Hospitalito Atitlan in Guatemala, which specializes in care for women and children. It raised $2,274.

Many students performed at the concert, including almost every Lexington High School a cappella group as well as many classical groups, such as nationally recognized student performers Yuki Beppu and Clark Ikezu, both violinists, and Dan Kim, a pianist.

The concert featured a diverse range of pieces and songs to appeal to different tastes, from classical pieces like the Mendelssohn Octet in E flat major to pop songs like "Payphone" by Maroon 5 and "As Long as You Love Me" by Justin Bieber.

"It felt good doing something I love that benefits in such a big way for people in need," said Sam Huang, a sophomore who performed in the concert.

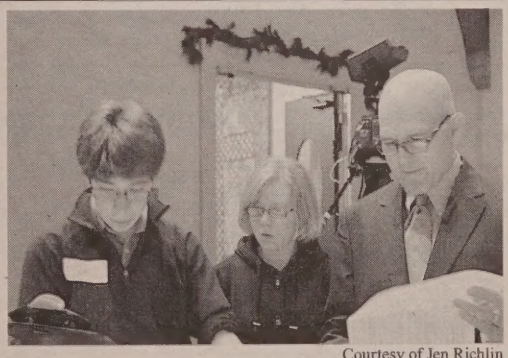
Attendees of the concert appreciated both the performance and charity aspects of the concert.

"I thoroughly enjoyed all of the performances, and all the performers seemed to have put a lot of effort into it," Matthew Liu, a freshman and audience member, said. "I really appreciate what they are doing."

Planning for the concert began last year, and became even more serious during the last couple of months before the concert. Joe Blumberg, a sophomore who organized the event, recruited many people to help.

"We got a lot of sponsors from [businesses] in town to pay for the insurance," he said, "and we got Wales Copy to print out posters, tickets and programs."

The Pura Vida Project, founded by former students from Clarke Middle School who wanted to make a difference in poor Costa Rican communities, had previously held bake sales and raked leaves to raise funds for Hospitalito Atitlan. The proceeds of the concert went to help the prenatal and birthing section of the hospital.



Courtesy of Jen Richlin

Joe Blumberg, a sophomore; Pearl Laxague, a junior; and Kenny Laxague, Pearl's father, organize and run the Pura Vida Project's Winter Musicfest! concert on Dec. 7.

Blumberg wanted to help even more.

"We wanted to do something bigger and make more money," he said.

Shortly after a substantial turnout for the winter concert, The Pura Vida Project is already looking ahead with fundraising plans for the future.

"[I]n the spring, we are planning an indoor soccer tournament," said Blumberg.

OSCAR NOMINEE REVIEWS

In light of the upcoming Academy Awards, The Musket deployed four writers to independently watch and review four promising nominees through grading them in several categories and critiquing the movies overall.

Category	Life of Pi (reviewed by Mandy Quan)	Les Misérables (reviewed by Annie Ma)	Zero Dark Thirty (reviewed by Woojin Kang)	Lincoln (reviewed by Julia Sun)
Best Picture	A	A+	A	A+
Actor/Actress in a Leading Role	A (Suraj Sharma)	A (Hugh Jackson)	A+ (Jessica Chastain)	A (Daniel Day-Lewis)
Actor/Actress in a Supporting Role	N/A*	A (Anne Hathaway)	A- (Jason Clarke)	A+ (Sally Fields & Tommy Lee Jones)
Music (Original Score & Songs)	A	A+	B+*	B+
Costume Design	A-	A+	A	A+
Directing	A+*	A+	A-*	A
Writing (Original & Adapted Screenplay)	A+	A+*	B-	A+
~Short Review by the Musket ~	"Life of Pi" is a spectacular movie that features 16-year-old Pi Patel, who tells a magical story about how his undying hope saved him from a devastating shipwreck. According to Pi, "You cannot know the strength of your faith until it is tested."	Gut-wrenching and tear-jerking, "Les Misérables" is truly a cinematic masterpiece. With fantastic musical performances by captivating actors and a heart-wrenching storyline, the movie is most definitely a must-see.	Whether or not the film accurately portrays the greatest-man-hunt in history does not matter. "Zero Dark Thirty" keeps you on the edge of your seat. What it lacks in script, it makes up for in casting and audience engagement.	Closely adhering to the events of the slavery controversy, "Lincoln" presents accurate historical facts in a dramatic, yet informative fashion. Knowledge of the events would allow greater appreciation of the director's skill.

* indicates the movie was not named in that category in the official Oscar nominations.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESOLUTIONS FOR 2ND SEMESTER/2013?

What do YOU plan to improve on for second semester?

Arduous Academics

"To not worry about colleges, which is out of my control at this point. Also, I should probably do my homework."
~ Darwin Ding, senior

"I want to get my physics grade higher by doing the work I haven't been doing."
~ Patrick Neal, senior

"To continue to find balance between my responsibilities in work and school with my daily life."
~ Katherine Murphy, history teacher

Tireless Teachers

"[To] do better gradewise... because 2nd quarter my grades dropped a bit"
~ Amy Zheng, sophomore

"None. I don't make 'em."
~ David Wininger, science teacher

"To lose the 5 pounds I'll gain over Christmas."
~ Patricia Lyons, science department secretary

Intriguing Individuals

"Finish my dad's 3-D printer."
~ Andrew Panasyuk, freshman

"I'm fine with being average."
~ Ethan Rao-Cramer, freshman

"To buy more stuff."
~ Arta Razavi, junior

"That my family will be healthy forever and ever."
~ Minkyu Kim, sophomore

"My New Year's resolution is to be 6'2"."
~ Mark Jones, freshman

STRESS - PAGE 1

breathing exercises and other relaxation activities into their classrooms, as well as extended homerooms. This coping mechanism, health teacher Barbara Jezak explained, helps bring oxygen into the body and calm the mind.

"Breathing is something we all know how to do," said Jezak.

The exercises are purposely simple so students can practice them outside of health class and incorporate them into their daily lives.

Another method taught in both health classes and dance classes is progressive relaxation, in which muscles are consciously stiffened, then relaxed in order to release tension from the body. Jezak said that studies support the effectiveness of these exercises if they are practiced regularly.

Reducing stress requires the efforts of both educators and students.

"We can't reduce stress without the kids wanting to do it," said Lasa. She said she believes students' self-imposed expectations affect their stress levels just as much as the school's expectations do, and that students must be willing to talk with their teachers to come up with mutual agreements.

"In a really schoolwide way," said Lasa, "whether I'm presenting to the kids in an assembly or in a classroom, I want to say that we're all in this together working on reducing these two or three things."

STUDENTS - PAGE 1

program is that they gain a lot of experience and opportunities so they have a better sense of the teaching profession," said Barbara Nobles, TSTT mentor and academic director of the METCO program at LHS.

One such opportunity is teacher shadowing, an aspect of the program that allows students to experience the classroom from a teacher's perspective.

"They're not just sitting there, they're looking at 'how does a teacher set up her classroom,' 'how does she differentiate her instruction,' 'how does she engage students' and just a whole lot of different things there that they should observe in a classroom," said Nobles.

"Two of the students were doing shadowing at Hastings Elementary School and when they finished all of us would talk about their experiences," she added. "I enjoy hearing about what they're learning from the program."

Nobles expressed LHS' hope that the development of the TSTT program will produce a diverse pool of future teachers to add to its teaching staff.

"It's a way of Lexington kind of grooming, preparing teachers of tomorrow to come back and be a part of their teaching staff and help build the diversity of the teaching population … They want to build the quality of the teachers and diversity of the teaching staff," said Nobles.

NEWTOWN - PAGE 2

Lasa's choice to restrict discussion about the Newtown tragedy. Though Lasa risked depriving some of an essential conversation, she was mindful that class discussions could force students into an uncomfortable situation.

Lasa defended her choice by saying that the main goals across the district were to reassure students of their safety, contain possible rumors and provide a sense of normalcy and routine.

"The clinical experts we consulted advised the principals to do their best to have the regular school day continue," she said. "We took this advice to heart, knowing we needed to make help available for students and faculty who struggled ... [But] we wanted to protect faculty and students who may not be able to handle the intense emotions that would undoubtedly occur in a class discussion."

Though I respect Lasa's decision, I cannot overemphasize how important it is for students to engage in meaningful conversation about such events in a safe environment. As young adults, we scare, subconsciously or not, as we consume information about horrific events without reassurances that we are safe. Thus, it is important to remember that the responsibility of our public schools is to create a balance in the dialogue so as to prevent any further emotional trauma and to provide a smooth transition back to school for students.

But given my own heightened emotions, I sympathize with Lasa's choice. The hours following the tragedy had me at a loss for words. There was no inspirational quip that would take any of the sting away. We were all left reeling in the shock of the situation. In school, there was nothing to be done but offer condolences and luckily, move on quietly with our day.

RENOVATIONS - PAGE 3

"[We] wanted to honor the fact that it had been there for a long time, so [we] reached out to Marvin personally. He was honored that we were going to recreate it, and we will do that in a much more modern form,"

Among others, Hagan was also behind the renovations in the art wing, which he said many students told him they admire. Some students, however, have mixed reviews on the sign in the main hallway.

"I really like it in general, but I just think it's kind of plain," said sophomore Lorena Sistig.

Other students see room for improvement.

"It seems stupid to replace the old mural with a gray wall," said Ryan Wilson, a senior. "But if they can represent the town and school's culture on the wall, that would be cool."

Lasa said that it was not possible to accommodate every student's desires.

"What I would hope people understand is that this is a large place and that change happens, that change is shocking, but it is impossible to consult every individual in order for change to happen," she said.

Lasa said she still consults with committees such as the Student-Faculty Senate, which facilitates discussion with students in the best way possible.

Meanwhile, Hagan said the whole image of the sign is still a work in progress, but he hopes to finish by the end of the year. He plans to add informational additions to both sides of the sign, featuring community education and other, more school-related student activities, such as information about class officers and student council.

Addressing skeptical students, Hagan said "reserve judgment until it's finished."

THANK YOU

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NHS - PAGE 4

Prokofiev Violin Concerto.

Though the judges could only pick three winners, audience members were delighted by all of the different acts.

"My favorite part of the process was watching the audience's reaction to all the performers," said Thaya Psyhojos, a senior and NHS president. "People were surprised by the singing and dancing talent, enthralled by the magic tricks and overall impressed with the performances that all the students put on."

Morgan Daruwala, a senior and audience member, also shared her praise for the student performers.

"I always think that it's really fun to see how much talent kids in our school have," she said. "Every time I go to a school event like that, I am thoroughly impressed by how hard Lexington kids work, in school and out."

Kumar added, "it was very heartwarming to see that kids are doing really well in areas other than academics."

In Kumar's view, the talent show was a success and a creative way of bringing members of the LHS community together to share their gifts while serving others in need.

"Students had fun, they got to show off their talent in front of their peers, their teachers, other parents — it's an opportunity for students also to come and participate, and feel good because they're helping a charity," said Kumar.

COLLEGE - PAGE 5

laxing, lighthearted second semester. And for you underclassmen, please remember: this is the worst possible time to ask the average senior where he or she is going to college. If you can help it, do us a favor: just wait for the bell to ring with the rest of us.

ALUMNI - PAGE 5

television industries because of what I learned in Mr. David's classes, which also emphasized women's history, about what it took for us to gain access to even the least glamorous jobs in the past.

And I look for the ways in which our culture regresses and turns back to lazy old ideas. Like Nick Carraway in "The Great Gatsby," we all beat on, boats against the current. It was Mr. David who taught me that we are only borne back ceaselessly into the past if we let it happen to ourselves.

Alyssa Rosenberg is a film, television and book critic for ThinkProgress.

ASSEMBLY - PAGE 3

with a host family in Senegal through a program called Global Citizen Year. He explained that the gap year allowed him the time to destress from the pressures of high school.

"I needed to refuel and regain the desire to learn," he said.

The reactions of students to the assembly were varied. Some found it immensely helpful, while others fell asleep within the first five minutes.

"[The assembly] was good," said Suubi Phyllis, a senior. "We got people to explain to us what a gap year was and what experiences we could have after school."

Other students, however, disappointed with the untimeliness of the information, thought less highly of the assembly.

"It's kind of late, since we already applied to colleges," said Nina Schulze, a senior who echoed the sentiments of many of her peers.

TA - PAGE 8

ing them an entire dance by March.

The students' young age, however, can sometimes make achieving these goals tough.

"I think the hardest part about this job is keeping the kids focused and learning because since they are really young they're always fooling around," Lee wrote.

As a volleyball coach for young children, Selivan, who has played the sport for five years and currently plays for the club volleyball team Smash, also deals with similar challenges.

Selivan started coaching kids this past summer, when she was offered a position to teach on Fridays during Family Night, a weekly event at MGA Sports in Norwood. Her students range from 5- to 13-year-olds.

"[The kids] get really restless, so I have to think of a lot of games," said Selivan. "The hardest part is probably keeping them busy. They usually don't want to do anything after five minutes, so I have to keep thinking of games on the spot."

In spite of the difficulties of keeping her students on task, Selivan said she wants to continue teaching volleyball because she finds it enjoyable and can receive community service hours from it.

"I'm planning on teaching [the kids] for as long as I can," she said.

Students juggle workload with extracurriculars to teach younger students

■ Hannah Kwon
Staff Writer

Many Lexington High School students are accustomed to juggling heavy workloads and lengthy extracurricular commitments, hopping from class to class to hockey practice, piano lessons and SAT prep sessions afterwards.

But some, such as junior Vivian Lee and freshman Nikita Selivan, also have the responsibility of teaching others on top of improving themselves in their area of dedication.

Lee, who has been dancing since age 4, is working her second year as a teacher's assistant at Lexington School of Ballet. She began the job when she accepted her jazz teacher's offer of assistant-teaching younger children's classes.

As a TA for middle-school-aged grade 3 jazz dancers, Lee leads her students through warm-ups, demonstrates dance moves and helps teach new moves.

Deidre Williams, Lee's jazz teacher at LSB, said that a TA can be a role model for students.

"I think it gives [the students] ... someone to look up to and allows them to see how they can develop as a student," she wrote in an email.

Williams added that when hiring a TA, she looks for a grounded, pleasant person "who is a good dancer and works correctly so that the students do not pick up on any bad habits."

While Lee's favorite part of the job is being able to work with the kids, she said the most challenging part of her job is remembering the warm-ups and combinations for all of the classes she teaches, as each level is different.

"[A]ll the students are watching me during class, so if I mess up they get really confused and mess up, too," Lee wrote in an email.

In addition to her job as a TA at LSB, Lee teaches her own class at the Huaxin Chinese School, a subsection of the Greater Boston Chinese Culture Association. She instructs 5-year-olds in Chinese dance and ballet basics, choreographing and teach-

[TA, page 7]

Colleges recruit student athletes with scholarship and skill on and off field

■ Mark Rosenberg
Ashvin Antony
Staff Writers

Stellar student athletes across the nation are recruited by competitive college teams annually. This year, several Lexington High School seniors, including Abby Grant, Nick Nerolien and Jeffrey Lang, captured the attention of various universities.

Johns Hopkins University recruited Grant to play field hockey, after her coaches from her club and LHS varsity teams contacted various college coaches to discuss how she would fit into each program. She visited Johns Hopkins, met the coaches and team members and chose it based on its combination of strong academics and a top field hockey program.

Grant said for Division III schools, athletes still need strong grades, but they still have a bit more leeway.

"I think athletes have a small advantage over other applicants because the [colleges] are trying to fill up a [roster]," she said.

The recruitment process began for Grant in eighth grade when she started to play in showcase field hockey tournaments as part of a club team. Scouts seeking talented athletes attended these tournaments. Sophomore year, Grant decided to make field hockey a top priority.

The non-athletic benefits of field hockey encouraged Grant to continue the sport.

"Choosing to play [field hockey] in college is more for social and exercise," she said. "It's just having another part of you, not just a student [nor] just an athlete but a student-athlete."

Jane Bergin, coach of the girls' varsity volleyball team, said, "Colleges look at [the student athletes'] growth through the high school years and their academics to see, is this a true student-athlete?"

For Nerolien, demonstrated interest in him by the college played a key factor. The University of Albany considered him a top recruit for Division I football, kept in constant contact and even offered him a full scholarship last summer.

"I like the idea that I will be playing on national television one day and going to college on a full scholarship," he wrote in an email.

Dartmouth University recruited Lang, a Boston Globe All-Scholastic athlete, for its golf program. Like Nerolien, Lang made his decision based on the school's interest in awarding him a roster spot.

"My first requirement was that I wanted to play a sport in college," he said. "I eliminated tons of my options by sending out emails to [college coaches] and if they didn't get back to me at all, I didn't consider that college anymore."

Lang showcased his skills to college scouts at regional and national golf tournaments. In addition to athletic ability, he said that colleges take maturity, camaraderie and academics into account. Lang especially noted the rigid academic qualifications placed on athletes by Ivy League schools.

Despite his success, Lang emphasized the college recruiting process as a fickle game, where coaches have to make precise decisions with limited information in filling out the teams' few roster spots.

"Coaches want to get the best kids they can for those two or three spots," he said. "A lot of schools recruit a bunch of kids, take their pick and leave the other kids out to dry."

Offbeat Athlete: Keya You shows discipline through taekwondo

■ Serena Hajjar
Richard Huang
Staff Writers

Among the many talented individuals that make their way through the halls at Lexington High School is Keya You, a junior who participates in the martial arts sport of taekwondo. Derived from South Korean culture, taekwondo is widely practiced by people all over the world and is famous for its swift movements and mental philosophy.

You attends the Ku's Tae Kwon Do Martial Arts Center in Woburn, practicing three to four times per week, for one to two and a half hours a day. In seventh grade, she decided to take on a martial arts sport, choosing taekwondo because of her interest in Korean culture.

According to You, taekwondo is a sport involving both physical and mental strength. While athletes must portray an "active" side to succeed, the sport requires that the individual achieve the art of patience first. Thus, taekwondo teaches an important life skill to those who learn it.

During a typical lesson, You continuously practices certain moves and tactics intended to help defend herself from others. Learning the calculative strategies in addition to the physical aspects of taekwondo is significant to her progress in the sport.

"You learn how to break things, which part of your body to use, what angle you should hit at and how strong or fast you need to go," she said.

One of the aspects that You most appreciates about taekwondo is that "it's not mainstream like karate, but it's pretty cool because it teaches you so much about your weaknesses and your strengths."

"It also teaches you how to protect yourself in certain situations so that you can figure out how to protect yourself in most, if not all, circumstances," she added.

Moreover, You said she believes there is further science and strategy to learn from the martial art. In her lessons, You is educated on the weak points of the human body, such as the whereabouts of vulnerable areas and the locations of certain nerves.

The deep appreciation You holds for the martial art is apparent to her fellow taekwondoists, including Hyunji Do, a junior who has practiced taekwondo with You for several years.

"Taekwondo is about the community and soul-searching, which I feel Keya really likes and has a passion for," she wrote in an email.

Staff photo by Arman Bilge

Keya You, a junior who earned her black belt in January 2012, demonstrates a taekwondo move.

Among the countless memories of the many lessons and tournaments You has participated in, her fondest memory dates back to January of last year, when she took the test to attain a black belt, the highest-ranking level of all belts. She remembered she had been instructed by her teacher to break 10 boards in order to achieve this highest honor of taekwondo.

Despite her dedication to the sport, You warned that taekwondo is not for everybody.

"Most people start taekwondo thinking that they're going to learn how to incapacitate people while doing backflips," she said. "But that's really not how it works. You don't just waltz in and magically turn into Bruce Lee; it's a long process."

While You maintained that one must "learn to get beat up first before beating others up," and stressed that taekwondo is a mentally challenging sport, she concluded that engaging in the art of taekwondo is a memorable experience for those who choose to do so.

"If you do stick with it, it's worth it," she said.